THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
of
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

presents

LAWRENCE FISHER

VIOLINIST

and

HELMUT BRAUSS

PIANIST

SONATA IN C MINOR,
OP. 30, NO. 2 ..... Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro con brio
Adagio cantabile
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro

SONATE (1927) ..... Maurice Ravel

Allegretto
Blues
Perpetuum mobile

INTERMISSION

SONATE IN E MINOR, OP. 27 (1918) ..... Hans Pfitzner

Bewegt, mit Empfindung
Sehr breit und ausdrucksvoll
Ausserst schwungvoll und feurig

Friday, November 26, 1971 — Convocation Hall
8:30 p.m. — Arts Building

COMING EVENTS:

Monday, November 29, from 3 to 5 p.m. in Convocation Hall—Program of vocal music. Admission is free.

Tuesday, November 30, from 12 noon to 1 p.m. in Convocation Hall—Workshop Concert. Admission free.

Friday, December 3, at 8:30 p.m. in Convocation Hall—Cheryll Melott and Claude Kenneson, violoncellists, with Brian Harris, harpsichordist. Admission is free.

HANS PFITZNER'S VIOLIN SONATA IN E MINOR, OPUS 27

Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949) perhaps epitomizes the German musical culture more exclusively than does any other composer of his generation. He was active as a conductor, composer, and teacher in various German cities. His works include operas, numerous songs, and concertos, as well as chamber, orchestral, and choral music. During the latter part of his life, he devoted considerable time to philosophical and polemical writings in which he expounded his views on the aesthetic bases of music and what he regarded as degenerative trends in twentieth-century music.

In superficial aspects, Pfitzner's music is firmly rooted in the traditions of Brahms, Reger, and other German composers of the late nineteenth century. Also typically German are his preoccupations with the "inner world," and with formal techniques of composition such as contrapuntal interplay, extensive working out of thematic materials, and application of the full language of nineteenth-century chromatic harmony. Pfitzner was a man of extraordinary deductive intelligence, an absolute musician of uncompromising integrity. He was also an artist whose music often achieves rare levels of emotional intensity and richness of content. Pfitzner's best-known work, the opera Palestrina, for which he wrote the libretto as well the music, has avowed autobiographical overtones. Indeed, comparisons between the two composers' historical positions are in many ways apropos. While Pfitzner may not be, as he refers to Palestrina in the opera, "the last true master of music, saviour of art in a world that has lost its soul," his music stands on its own merit, unduly neglected because of its divergence from the international musical mainstreams of its time.

The Violin Sonata, Op. 27, dates from 1918, at the peak of Pfitzner's most productive period. The first movement opens with an immediate statement of the rhapsodic main theme. This and other thematic materials are given extensive development, the piano and violin playing more or less equal and intertwining roles in the presentation of musical ideas. The principles of sonata design are evident, but developmental materials are dispersed throughout the movement, rather than being concentrated in a mid-section. The capabilities of both instruments are exploited fully, but never as ends in themselves. Pfitzner seems especially fond of the rich sonorities afforded by the lower registers of the piano. His performance directions in this and other movements tell us much about his serious attitude toward his compositions, for example (in English translations which speak not nearly so eloquently as the original German): "very grand and victorious"; "always warm and expressive"; "with exuberance"; "with a sense of well-being." The second, slow movement, alternately contemplative and effusive, requires for its effect the kind of concentration that Pfitzner himself gave to his music. However, it is linked to a final movement, a virtuoso tour-de-force, in which Pfitzner seems more willing to engage in musical pyrotechnics for their own sake.

W. K.